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SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/HIZBALLAH - DUTCH SUPPORT DESIGNATION
AS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

REF: SECSTATE 26062

Classified By: Herbert Traub, Acting Political Counselor, for reasons 1
.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Jules Gerzon (MFA, Office of Political Affairs) confirmed that the Netherlands supports designating Hizballah as a terrorist organization at the February 16 meeting of the EU Clearinghouse. Dutch efforts to lobby EU Member States have had a mixed reaction, he added, noting that some states merely "take note" of the Dutch message and say they will make up their own minds. Others ask for more "legal proof" or "hard evidence." The case is yet to be made to them, and to the EU 10, he said.

2. (S) Gerzon said the Dutch ultimately came to the decision on Hizballah because of "convincing evidence gathered by their own secret service." That Hizballah had "welcomed the terrorist acts of others" was by itself almost enough evidence to convince the Dutch, he said, considering that "at high levels the political and military wings of Hizballah are intrinsically connected." He noted that Hizballah "had not admitted direct responsibility for terrorist acts like Hammam had done," so some in the EU still "look for hard evidence of their complicity." The Dutch have "shared the basis for their conclusions with other EU partners," he revealed, adding "it has not been enough to convince those who seek harder proof." He suggested it would be helpful at this juncture if the "USG could provide any new hard evidence to service counterparts in EU Member States" in order to make the case.

3. (C) Gerzon revealed that some EU States are arguing that "now is not the time" to designate Hizballah since it could "negatively affect the movement in the Middle East peace process." Finally, he said that the new EU10 are still considering their positions on this matter and have "remained quiet up to now" in EU discussions. He suggested they might welcome any additional information the USG could provide.
SOBEL